

interpretation of the concept of "consent" could not be reconciled with modern health norms and had to be changed to explicitly require that consent is informed. (The new law went into effect at the beginning of this year.) In reality, numerous international officials have repeatedly expressed concern over the sterilization practices in the Slovak Republic and the inadequacy of the Slovak Government's response to them, including in the April 2005 report on the situation of Roma issued by the Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner.

In light of all this, it is extremely frustrating to read that Slovak officials have, in recent months, made misleading statements about this important issue. Apparently one official has even declared that "illegal sterilizations of Romani women never happened in Slovakia."

Mr. Speaker, when the institutions of justice are perceived to follow one set of rules for the majority and another for minorities, this is a recipe for social unrest—as we know from our own painful history.

I understand that it is always a difficult exercise for any government to admit its own wrongdoing or the wrongdoings of the majority society—we know this, too. But Romani mistrust of government institutions will only deepen if the Slovak Government persists in denying the wrongs perpetrated against their community.

CONGRATULATING THE VENICE
HIGH SCHOOL LADIES'
VOLLEYBALL TEAM

HON. KATHERINE HARRIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Ms. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Venice High School Lady Indians volleyball team, on their recent victory in the 2006 Class 5A state volleyball championship.

The team's 26–7 regular season record and championship victory certainly deserve applause; however, the manner in which they achieved their goal truly makes them champions.

Under the leadership of Coach Brian Wheatley, this band of sisters turned a potentially disappointing season into a modern-day Cinderella story. Runners-up in 2004, the team began the season with only two returning starters, offering little hope for anything more than a "rebuilding" season. However, a little hope and a lot of grit and determination was all this team needed.

They saw in each other the desire to succeed, the willingness to sacrifice and the wisdom to work as a team; with perseverance and commitment to each other, they refused to give up.

In the end, the season was a learning experience. And it was an experience in which the entire community shared. The Lady Indians deserve their championship, and they deserve our thanks for a season of inspiration.

The members of the 2005 Venice High School Varsity volleyball team are: Leah Bodi, Marla Cooke, Dana Dumas, Natalie Gaudreau, Ashley Graf, Nickie Halbert, Julie Howlett, Casie Richards, Casey Taylor, Michaela Trimble, and Danielle Witte.

To this collection of Cinderellas, I offer my congratulations.

RECOGNITION OF TESSA VELLEK

HON. KENNY C. HULSHOF

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Mr. HULSHOF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a very special young woman. Tessa Vellek, who hails from my hometown of Columbia, MO, is only eleven years old, but has already accomplished a lifetime of charitable work. Tessa has created a highly successful charitable organization operated by children, known as Euphoria, because, as she stated, "I wanted an organization where kids could decide how they wanted to help other people. I wanted the community to see that we aren't just followers, but a group of motivated youth seeking to make Columbia a better place." Among their many volunteering activities, Tessa and her friends have collected books for schools, shelters and hospitals, gathered food for the homeless and entertained seniors living in retirement communities.

Tessa was recently recognized for her efforts. Every year, Nestlé honors outstanding young women and men for philanthropic activities in their local community. Out of 158 applicants, Nestlé selects 24 young people for their Very Best in Youth award. This year, Nestlé picked Tessa as one of the nation's Very Best in Youth. I could not be prouder of this young woman. Not only has she dedicated significant amounts of her free time to helping out those who are less fortunate, Tessa has also amassed an impressive academic record, including earning straight A's, receiving prestigious academic achievements and winning an award in the National PTA Reflections Essay Contest. I have no doubt she will be highly successful in whatever career she pursues, although a budding passion for literature and creative writing could lead her to become a novelist. These volunteering experiences will surely provide Tessa excellent material to draw from in her writing.

After seeing the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, Tessa organized a Ride/Walk fundraising event in Columbia to help those in the Gulf Coast affected by the hurricane. Nestlé generously agreed to match whatever funds were raised. Out of the \$210,000 raised nationwide, Tessa and her Ride/Walk event netted \$71,000. The combined \$420,000 has been donated to the American Red Cross Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund, which has been invaluable to aiding the plight of storm victims. I am always amazed at the generosity, benevolence and leadership of to day's youth. With people like Tessa and the other Nestlé youth recipients, I strongly believe the future of our nation is in good hands.

I hope my colleagues share in my admiration of Tessa's good works and encourage all Americans to follow this fine young woman's lead and get involved with charitable works in communities and neighborhoods across our great land.

TRIBUTE TO DENNIS B.
UNDERWOOD

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life and memory of Dennis B. Underwood, an esteemed Western water expert and chief executive officer and general manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Mr. Underwood passed away November 2 at his home in Alta Loma, California.

In commemorating the life of Dennis Underwood, I would like to highlight some of the notable contributions of his career as a humble public servant of this great nation. With a career that spanned nearly four decades, Mr. Underwood took part in water resource development and management at both the state and federal levels. Perhaps his biggest contribution to California's water supply was during his role as the Metropolitan Water District's vice president of Colorado River resources, which he was instrumental in the development of a plan that would bring the state's water use in compliance within its legal apportionment of usage from the Colorado River. Additionally, Mr. Underwood played a central role in negotiating one of the nation's largest habitat conservation programs covering 27 species along approximately 450 miles of the lower Colorado River. During his brief tenure as CEO and general manager of the Metropolitan Water District, Mr. Underwood launched initiatives that sought to further enhance relationships with public agencies as well as seeking new partners to preserve California's water future.

Dennis Underwood's desire to serve his country expanded beyond public service as he honorably served in the military during the Vietnam War as a captain with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Mr. Underwood won the admiration of his colleagues through his respectful interaction and clear sense of leadership; qualities which he carried with him later in life.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring the life of Dennis B. Underwood and recognizing the lasting contributions and accomplishments that highlighted his career in water resource development and management.

TRIBUTE FOR THE AMERICAN AND
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETIES FOR
YAD VASHEM

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support and admiration for the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem, which will convene for their Annual Tribute Dinner on November 20th in New York. The American and International Societies for Yad Vashem are the development arms of Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, Israel.

The American and International Societies for Yad Vashem provide a great service to the